

## The Droop Mountain Battle

*(A paper prepared by John D. Sutton)*

After the country was freed from Indian invasions and Virginia became established, the people began to look more to their financial affairs and public interests. It was not long until those west of the Alleghenys became jealous of their eastern brethren. Tobacco was the money crop of the east, raised by slave labor, whilst those west of the mountains depended for many years upon furs and ginseng as their principal commodity in trade. And as it has been from the beginning of time taxation began to be agitated. The great body of the east escaped very largely from their equal share of the burden, but controlled very largely the political affairs of the state. The western portion of the state was powerless. Their only relief was in separation. The Civil War afforded them that opportunity; hence when the war came on, 32,000 of the young men of Western Virginia joined the Union forces. Though they were living in a slave state the great majority refused to answer the call of Virginia, and when the 20th of June, 1863, came, and West Virginia was admitted as a state into the union, the defenders of the new state were determined to sustain and defend the state at whatever cost of blood and treasure. The south was as fully determined to retain the territory of the state, and to prevent the rending of the state—a state for which we all have the most profound love and respect. But a sacrifice had to be made and the battle was joined—a battle of separation. The best blood of Virginia and West Virginia, men who had met on many bloody battlefields prior to the great Battle of Droop Mountain, soldiers inured to hardship and dangers, not soldiers of fortune, not soldiers for spoil, but men in whose breasts was a living principle, a principle implanted in their youth by their fathers. At a distance, it would look like common consent that the forces were to be assembled for a final test of strength. General Averell, with a very formidable force, left Beverly on November 1st, to find the enemy and give battle wherever he might be found. General Wm. L. Jackson, commanding a brigade and several other units, battalions and companies, was joined by General Echols on the morning of the 6th by a splendid brigade of fighting men. General Averell encountered the Confederates in force near Mill Point on the morning of the 5th and drove them to the foot of Droop Mountain, and there

General Skeen was the lieutenant of the company. He appeared to be the purchasing agent of the County Court, as he paid the bills for the army and took receipts therefor. Under date of June 25, 1861, he rendered an itemized account under expenses incurred on march of "Pocahontas Rescues," amounting to \$68.68. It was allowed and \$25 paid on account. He notes a balance of \$43.68 due him, and I doubt if it was ever paid to him.

The big item of expense was \$37.42 for shoes—nineteen pairs bought on May 23, at Philippl, from J. P. Thompson. The other items include bacon, tallow, flour, meal, horse feed, gloves, hats, cotton cloth, calico, socks, shirts, blankets and whatnot.

On May 20, at J. W. Marshall's store he bought a pair of gloves for Captain Stofer at 25 cents and six combs for privates for \$1.00. Also 2 cravats, \$1; 2 flannel shirts, \$2; and 2 more pair gloves 50 cents.

On May 22, at Beverly, from A & B Crawford, two hats for \$3.25. From J. Burket, also at Beverly, pair of shoes at \$2 and 2 pairs socks 30 cents. On the same date from E. B. Bucher 12 1-2 pounds of tallow for \$1.25 and 52 1-2 pounds of bacon at 14c, \$8.35.

On May 24, Elder Douglas was paid \$4.33 for supper, lodging and breakfast for 13 persons.

On May 25, \$2.50 is paid Jno. B. Curin for Gilham tactics.

On May 17, Captain Stofer certifies that an account of Wm. H. Slanker for 9 yards of calico, 1 1-2 yards of bleach cotton, 8 3-4 yards of cotton drilling and one made shirt, in all \$4.37, is correct and necessary for the use of said company.

Mr Skeen started off fine to keep a daily report on the progress of the "Pocahontas Rescues" but I guess he got too busy, for after three days, he quits in the middle of a page.

In speaking of this march, the old soldiers referred to it as the "Tin Cup Campaign." A cup was all the equipment furnished them. They provided their own arms.

The cavalry referred to was Captain Andrew McNeel's Company. On their return from Philippl, this company was disbanded and the men joined the 11th Virginia—Bath Squadron—and Captain Wm L. McNeel's and Captain J. W. Marshall's companies, 19th Virginia Cavalry.

On the return of the Pocahontas Rescues, the company was disbanded and the men with a number of additions made up company I, 25th Virginia Infantry. J. H. McLaughlin was elected first lieutenant.

This company was engaged in the following battles: Philippl, McDowell, Winchester, Cross Keys, Port Republic, Seven Days, Fight around Richmond, Slaughter Mountain, Second Manasses, Brestow Station, Sharpsburg, Fredericksburg, Second Winchester, Gettysburg, Mine Run, and the Wilderness. At the Wilderness the 25th was captured; the Pocahontas Rescues and replacements had been reduced to seventeen men; of this seventeen, eleven lived through the war, six dying in prison.

The last member of Company I, to pass over that I know of was Captain J. W. Mathews, of Anthonys Creek, who died about twelve years ago.

Captain Stofer came from the Valley of Virginia. He was a lawyer, and he served as commonwealth's attorney for Pocahontas a number of terms. He had been a soldier in the Mexican war, and fought in a number of battles. My recollection is that Captain Stofer was not wounded in the war between the states until the battle of Cross Keys when he fell with five bullet holes in him. Every one of these wounds was considered mortal, but he recovered and survived the war some twenty years. As a child, I remember him as a friendly,

courtly gentleman, known in his wide circle of friends as the "Count."

General William Skeene served as clerk of both the county and circuit courts. He was succeeded just before the war by the late William Curry. He was a resident attorney at Huntersville for many years. He was elected Attorney General of the State of Virginia.

I certainly do wish that General Skeene had written up the "Tin Cup Campaign" day by day, instead of quitting off on the record the evening of the third day.

You have got to hand it to the General that he was a considerable of a manager to march an army of fifty-six men some ninety miles, and back on a campaign of several weeks, at a cost to Pocahontas County of only \$68.68.

After the war Confederate soldiers were deprived of the rights of citizenship by their inability to take the test oath. Before a man could vote, hold office, practice law, etc., he must swear that he had not aided or abetted the Confederacy. This did not phase Captain Stofer a bit. At the first opportunity he presented himself at the bar as a practicing attorney, took the oath and resumed his law work where he left off after four years service in the army of the Confederate States of America. The

grand jury indicted him for perjury, and he appealed to the Supreme Court, where the case dragged along for years. I presume that the case against the Captain just naturally went by the board when the new state went democratic in 1870, a new constitution adopted and the rights of the southern sympathizers restored. I will look that case up some day when I have the time. I have the impression that Count Stofer was defended by Spencer Dayton, a native of New England, father of the late Judge A. G. Dayton, of Philippl, United States District Judge. I do know that Mr Dayton successfully defended the numerous Confederate soldiers who were indicted for murder after the war, in this county.

My friend, the late Hugh P. McLaughlin, always took delight in relating his experiences as a boy on this "Tin Cup Campaign." Some where along the road to Philippl they came to a farm where there was a mowing machine with its tongue propped up, in a shed. Few of them had ever seen a mower, and word was passed down the ranks that it was a cannon. One boy took a good look at it, and remarked on the length of the ramrod!

*Pocahontas Times*

1/16/41

Juanita S. Dilley

Mrs. Rella F. Yeager

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Camp Price, Droop Mountain

Droop Mountain

State Park

DROOP MT. STATE PARK

On top of picturesque Droop Mountain, about four miles from the little town of Hillsboro, in West Virginia, CCC Camp Price, Co. 2,598 have done some wonderful work on the State Park.

It was on this site that the greatest battle of the Civil War in West Virginia was fought about 72 years ago. It is said that the only brass cannon that this part of the confederate army had lies buried in a swamp within a stone's throw of the camp. Although 72 years have elapsed since the great battle, many signs and memoirs of it are left. While rambling through the woods one may find the old rock breastworks which were used by the Confederate and Union soldiers alike.

About three miles from the camp there is a large cave in which soldiers manufactured gun powder. It is now known as "Saltpetre Cave." Occasionally old grave markers are found.

Although there are signs posted along Route 219 showing the position of the great battlefield, it has not yet received much attention from tourists because of the seemingly impossibility of exploration, as not much can be seen from the highway. This is an ideal place for picnic's, as the CCC boys have built chimneys for camp cooking, and seats and tables, etc. and have made the site of the battle one of the better known parks in West Virginia. Roads and trails have been built that lead to views that are entrancing.

Visitors are always welcome.

Juanita S. Dilley  
Pocahontas Co.  
Chapter 4, section 4b-3

### BATTLE OF BARTOW - October 3, 1861

There were three battles known as the battles of the Greenbrier Ford, which took place at Travelers Repose, now known as Bartow. One was October 3, 1861, one Oct. 31, 1861, the other Dec. 12, 1861. Since the first of these battles, the one of October 3, was the biggest one, that is the one we shall consider in this report.

The first year of the war saw five battles in the Upper Tract, as upper Pocahontas was usually called at that time. The reason being that the Staunton and Parkersburg Turnpike crossed the Greenbrier Valley at this place and it was one of the most important thoroughfares in the nation at the outbreak of the Civil War. It was well served by stage coach lines and it formed a favorite route for persons from the middle west who wished to go to Washington and other eastern points.

The political significance of Western Virginia seceding from Virginia made the passage of the Allegheney the most important spots to the military operations on both sides.

The Federal army had already occupied Tygarts Valley in Randolph, and the Confederates hurried armies into the Greenbrier Valley in Pocahontas. Their foremost post was at Travelers Repose. The camp was called Camp Bartow in honor of Col Francis S. Bartow of the 7th Georgia Regiment who was killed in the battle of Bull Run in July 1861. The camp was commanded by Gen. H. R. Jackson of Georgia, who no doubt named it in honor of his friend.

Since the building of a small town on this old battle field, the postoffice once known as Travelers Repose was changed to Bartow.

The Federal Army was camped at White's Top of Shavers Cheat at an elevation of about 4,200 feet. About 20 miles east of them on the top of the main Allegheny was camped the Confederates at an elevation of about 4,100 feet. The new soldiers were trained in sight of each other on these high tops. They lay there for months in sight of each other, and during that time had had but one skirmish. That was when the Confederates had attempted to cross Cheat at night and had gotten lost.

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Battle of Bartow

Camp Bartow was at the foot of the mountains. All three on the Staunton & Parkersburg Turnpike. The Yeagers, Arbogasts, Slavens, Burners and Houchins who owned this section of the county were all secessionists. In fact there was hardly a Union man in the whole of Greenbank District. No where in the mountains were the Confederate States more solidly supported.

Gen. Reynolds at Whites Top had on Sept. 13, protected the left flank of the army at Elkwater, and he had kept Loring from passing so he decided to do some passing himself. He decided that he would march an army over and surround and subdue Staunton. He ordered his men to prepare four days rations each, and on the morning of Oct. 3, 1861 at one o'clock A. M. he put his forces in motion and they marched down the mountain to Durbin. He had about 5,000 troops and 6 batteries of big guns. His forces were: Howes' Battery, Loomis' Battery, Michigan Volunteer Battery, Daums' Battery, Virginia Volunteer Artillery.

24th, 25th, and 32 Ohio Regiments 7th, 9th, 13th, 14th, 15th, and 17th Indiana Reg. of Infantry. Robinsons Ohio Cavalry. Greenfield Pennsylvania Cavalry, Brackman's Indiana Cavalry.

Opposed to them were the Third Arkansas, First Georgia, Twelfth Georgia, Twenty-third Virginia, Rices Battery, Schumakers Battery, and the 31st Virginian of which Captain J. C. Arbogasts Greenbank Company was made up of local people (Hope to have a complete list of this Co. soon)

The Federals got to Durbin about sun up and saw an advance guard under Col. Edward Johnson in front of them in or above the narrows which separates Frank from Durbin. They set up a cannon or two and fired at them. Johnson fell back and the Federals marched up the road and through the fields. Johnson had his horse shot and killed in this engagement. He held the column up for an hour and it was not until six cannon had opened on him and a flanking movement started to his right that he retired to the main works at Camp Bartow.

The Federal army placed two batteries in front of the Confederate breastworks. These batteries were 6 guns in the meadow about half way from the Burner house to the East Fork and 2 guns on the other side of the turnpike. The Confederate batteries were on a low hill just behind Travelers Repose, where there are embankments still plainly to be seen.

In addition Lieutenant Wooding placed a gun on the Turnpike directly in front of Travelers Repose, from which he fired 90 rounds that day point-blank at the enemy across the river bottom. The big guns kept up a steady firing from seven in the morning until 2:30 in the afternoon. A rifle cannon the Confederates expected to do great damage was a disappointment for after the first few rounds the ball stuck and could not be dislodged until Sergt. Timothy H. Stamps could get there from Monterey. There was more powder burned in the big guns that day than at any other battle in the mountains. It was a great day for noise.

But all this cannon firing was meant to cover up infantry work. It will be remembered that the turnpike is an east and west road and that there is a north and south road paralleling the river. This Huntersville road comes to the turnpike at Travelers Repose.

Gen. Reynolds proceeded to send infantry against both ends of the Confederate breastworks. It looks like one could hardly call it a flanking movement for these detachments did not attempt to swing in wide circles. It was the plan to let the artillery keep everything hot along the turnpike, while his forces were to attack both ends of the Confederate position.

Jackson evidently expected a wide flung encirclement for he had sent Johnson up the river for more than a mile, and he was clear above the place that the Federals attempted to cross.

Jackson entrusted the defense of his left (down the river) to Colonel Rust and his Arkansas troops. It will be remembered that the Federals had a right large order in that they had to charge across wide open fields, ford the river and climb a steep hill to take a fortified camp.

Juanita S. Dilley  
Battle of Bartow

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Rust marched down the road toward Greenbank until he had drawn away from the river and was on an elevation overlooking the river. He then marched by the end of the breastworks and took a station between the river and the breastworks, but before he could form his men, the Federal batteries commenced a rapid fire, and a regiment of infantry left the road at the Burner homestead and marched across the meadow; waded the river and climbed the hill. The Arkansas troops, however, met them at the crest of the hill and the regiment of infantry went back and marched up the hill on the other side of the road. This movement of the Federal troops moving first to the right, then to the left, puzzled the Arkansas commander. There seemed to be a discussion as to what the orders were. I was warned afterwards that there had been a misunderstanding of orders.

Col. Richardson saying, "My regiment is to attack on my right." "Not at all", said Col. Wilder, "You are to attack the enemys right". This confusion of orders marked the turning point of the battle. Now both regiments were in the same place, and it therefore permitted the whole power of the Confederate artillery to be directed to one place. The federals could not face the fire and retreated in great confusion. Both regiments went into the woods at the north of the turnpike and added to the confusion already in that quarter.

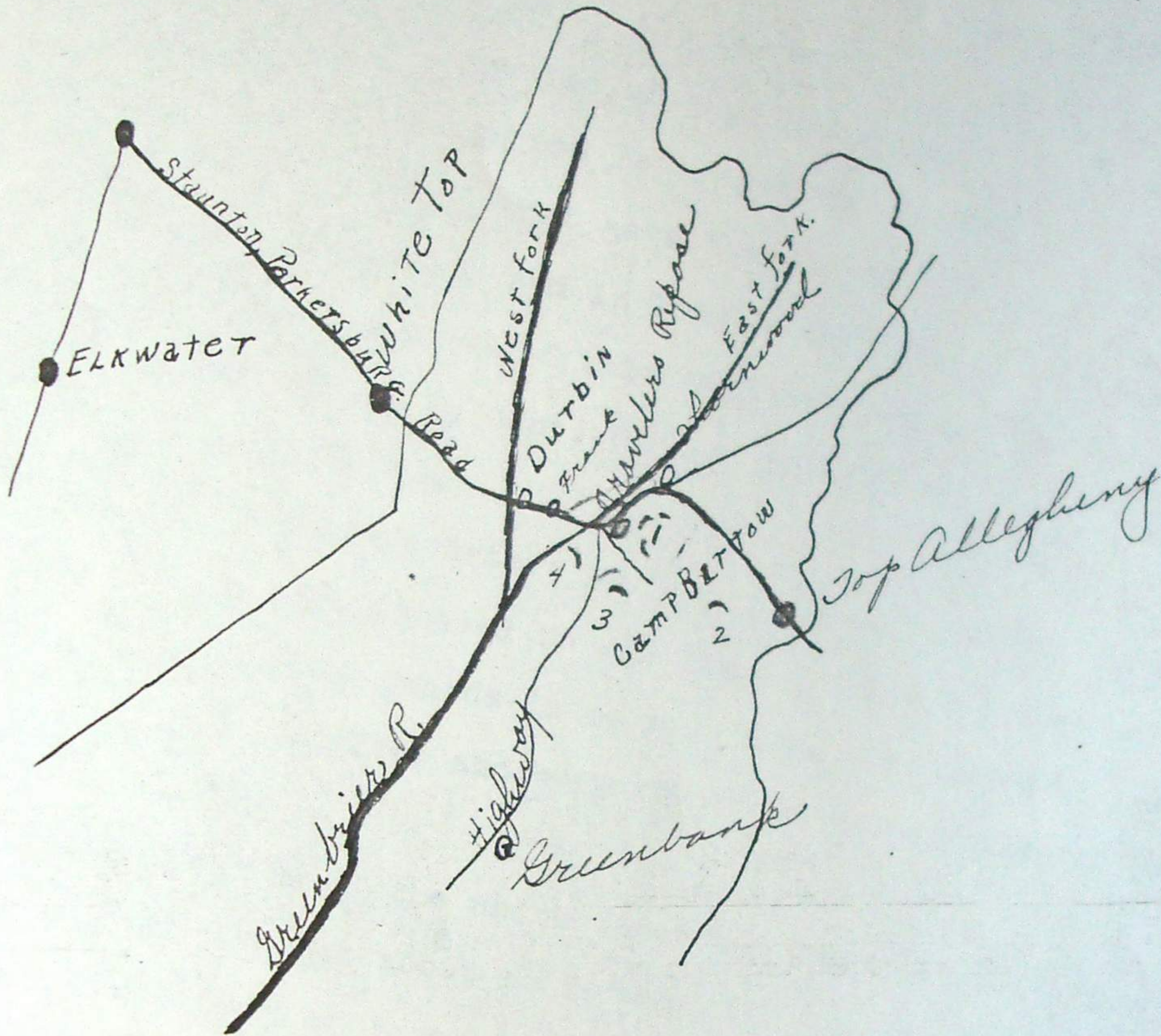
The Confederates called this one of the greatest victories of that year. The Federals called it a reconnissance in force.

Loss in killed and wounded, Federals 43, Confederates 52, including 13 missing.

The Federals lost one stand of colors.

Staunton Co.  
Section 4 b-3  
No. 4

Granita S. Dilley  
Clover Lick, W. Va.  
Feb. 28, 1940

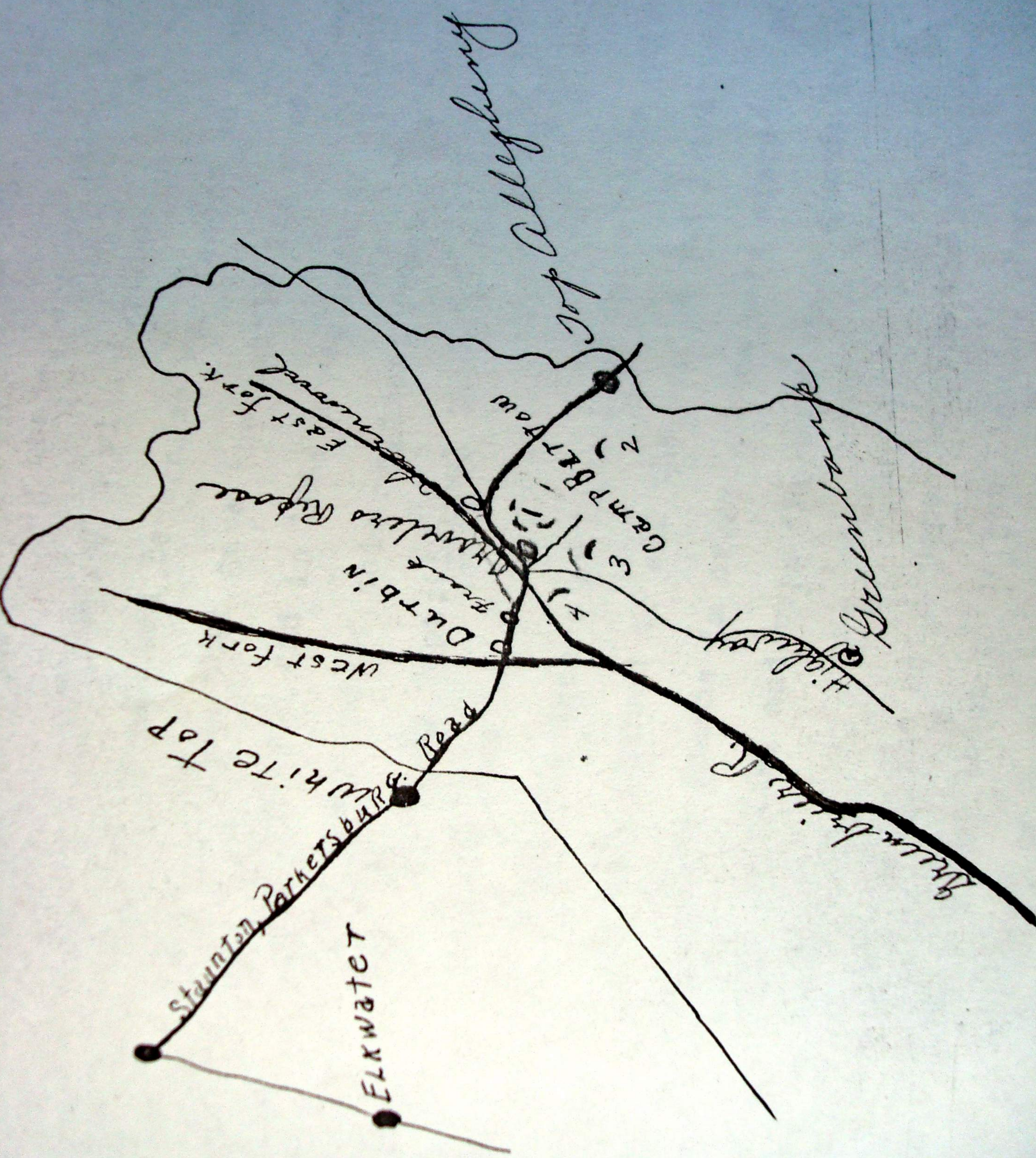


Field from where the  
Federals fought.

- Union fortifications
- Confederate fortifications
- Fortifications as they  
were placed on hills  
1, 2, 3, 4, facing  
the turnpike. I was  
up there one day last week,  
and Mr. Beard, who now  
owns Travelers Rest, showed  
me these fortifications, which  
are still plainly seen.

CIVIL WAR





Field from where the  
Federal fought.

- Union fortifications
- Confederate fortifications
- Fortifications as they  
were placed on hills

1, 2, 3, 4, facing

the trumpet. I was  
up there one day last week,  
and Mr. Beard, who now  
owns Travelers Rest, showed  
me these fortifications, which  
are still plainly seen.

Juanita Dilley  
Clover Lick, W. Va. 53

BATTLE OF DUNCAN'S LANE

At the West Union School house at the foot of the mountain, on the road that leads to the Williams River country in 1864, lived Henry Duncan, in a double log house on the headwaters of Stony Creek. William Beverage lived about a quarter of a mile farther up the creek. Part of the passway between Duncan and Beverages was fenced on both sides as a lane. It was this lane that gave the battle its name.

The state was formed in 1863 and in 1864 a regiment of state guards was formed at Buchannon, and of this regiment Pocahontas furnished one company, captained at times by Capt. Samuel Young a minister, and later by Capt. Isaac Walton Allen.

This regiment had its headquarters at Beverley. These state guards were gallant soldiers and were exposed to all the perils and privations of the Civil War. However state guards in other states were placed, those in West Virginia were real soldiers and were the only state guards in the Union eligible for pension.

In 1864, the preservation of the union depended upon the reelection of Lincoln. A peace party had set about to defeat Lincoln, therefore, every vote counted. The county of Pocahontas was controlled by the Confederates, yet the little town of Edray was loyal to the Federal states. Therefore, it was determined by the West Virginia authorities to hold an election for president in the county. Arrangements were made to hold a guard company was detailed to bring that election off.

They marched on foot from Beverly to Edray a distance of 54 miles going by way of Elk and reaching Edray a few days before the election. On its way, the company camped near the headwaters of Elk River and one of the soldiers, Washington Neff, obtained leave of absence to visit

his wife who was visiting at William Gibsons. Here he was captured by a squad belonging Captain J. C. Gays Company of Confederate scouts and was taken captive to their headquarters at the farm of Samuel Gay. (Just above where the Fair ground now is). That night in an attempt to escape Neff was shot and killed. Word of his death reached the company at Edray. Captain Young was in command, Captain Walton Allen was there, too. Every member of the company was a Pocahontas Man. It had been recognized as very dangerous to send one company into Confederate Pocahontas and they were already apprehensive of being in the very heart of this county. The death of Neff impressed them further with the dangers of their position. By this time there was a terrible cloud hanging over Edray district, and a pitch battle was imminent to be fought between men who had grown up together, but who had been schooled for four intensive year in civil war. However, the polls were opened under the oak standing near the home of William Sharp.

The soldiers all voted irrespective of age, and many of the citizens of the vicinity voted also. The vote was solid for Lincoln.

Aaron Moore was chosen as messenger to take the votes into the northerwestern part of the state where the existance of the government of West Virginia was recognized. The company of state guards prepared to act as his guard. It was decided best not to return to Beverly by way of the pike (now Seneca Trail). The return was to be made by crossing the river at Marlins Bottom, by Huntersville, and the Hill country, by Dunmore and Greenbank to the Staunton and Parkersbung Turnpike at Travelers Repose, thence across Cheat Mountain. The company reached Marlins Bottom but when they came in sight of the bridge they saw a Confederate soldier at the end of the bridge on horseback. When the horseman saw the Union soldiers he turned and galloped away. This